

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Examiner and Applicant's representative discussed the lack of the required foreign priority document during a brief conversation on 21 March 2008. Examiner does note from the stamped copy of the postcard provided with Applicant's most recent response, and from various papers in the application that were entered with the original filing, that a foreign priority document was submitted. However, there is at present no foreign priority document in the application file wrapper. A certified copy of the foreign priority document is required.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments, see pages 16-19, filed 26 December 2007, with respect to the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) set forth in the previous office action, mailed 26 June 2006, have been withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-24 and 29-53 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Independent claims 1, 6, 11, 16, 45, 46, 47 and 48 each include the feature of obtaining an initial image based on ID information which is inseparably a part of an original image, the original image containing second image data which is not related to the ID information or any watermark. The second image data is used to extract a corresponding portion of the initial image data. Geometrically-agreeing equivalent original picture data which corresponds to the ID information and the second image data are composed such that the second image data overlays the portion of the equivalent original picture data.

Examiner has not found this particular combination of features in the prior art. The closest prior art reference is the previously cited Evans (USPN 6,577,746 B1), which does not teach that the second image data is unrelated to the ID information and any watermark data. Further, Examiner has not found any references which would render any of the independent claims obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 6, 11, 16, 45, 46, 47 and 48 are

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allowable over the prior art. Furthermore, the remaining dependent claims are allowable over the prior art at least due to their dependency from an allowable independent claim.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAMES A. THOMPSON whose telephone number is (571)272-7441. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward L. Coles can be reached on 571-272-7402. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Edward L. Coles/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2625

/J. A. T./
Examiner, Art Unit 2625

21 March 2008